

Teacher / Parent Handbook

*(Handbook) – references the page from the State Dyslexia Handbook

I. Definition of Dyslexia (Handbook Pg. 1)*

As defined in Texas Education Code §38.003

(1) “*Dyslexia*” means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.

(2) “*Related disorders*” includes disorders similar to or related to dyslexia such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The definition of the International Dyslexia Association states:

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (Adopted by the International Dyslexia Board of Directors, November 12, 2002).

The primary difficulties of a student identified as having dyslexia occur in phonemic awareness and manipulation, single-word decoding, reading fluency, and spelling. Secondary consequences of dyslexia may include difficulties in reading comprehension and/or written expression. These difficulties are unexpected for the student’s age, educational level, or cognitive abilities. Additionally, there is often a **family history** of similar difficulties.

II. Screening for Dyslexia (Handbook Pg. 4 & 5)

In accordance with TEC §28.006, Montgomery ISD administers early reading instruments in grades K - 2 to determine students’ reading development and comprehension. If, on the basis of the reading instrument results, students are determined to be at risk for dyslexia and other reading difficulties, the students’ parents/guardians are notified. In addition, an accelerated (intensive) reading program that appropriately addresses students’ reading difficulties and enables them to “catch up” with their typically performing peers is implemented. Should students continue to struggle with reading, writing, and spelling during the intensive reading instruction, then Montgomery ISD will initiate procedures to recommend these students for assessment for dyslexia. The information from the early reading instruments will be one source of information in deciding whether or not to recommend a student for assessment for dyslexia.

Screening for dyslexia of students in grades 3 – 12 may include, but is not limited to: performance on state mandated test(s), a student’s grades/performance in reading, writing and spelling, and teachers’ observations of the characteristics of dyslexia. This information will be utilized when deciding whether or not to recommend a student for assessment for dyslexia.

III. Data Gathering (Handbook Pg. 5)

At any time that a student continues to struggle with one or more components of reading, Montgomery ISD will collect additional information about the student. The information will be used to evaluate the student's academic progress and determine what actions are needed to ensure the student's improved academic performance. Information to be considered includes the results from some or all of the following:

- Vision screening
- Hearing screening
- Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- Basal reading series assessment
- Accommodations provided by classroom teachers
- Academic progress reports and/or report cards
- Samples of school work
- Parent conferences
- Testing for limited English proficiency
- Speech and language screening through a referral process
- The K-2 reading instrument as described in TEC §28.006
- State student assessment program as described in TEC §39.002

Among the actions that Montgomery ISD has available for the student is a recommendation that the student be assessed for dyslexia. Montgomery ISD recommends assessment for dyslexia if the student demonstrates the following:

- Poor performance in one or more areas of reading and/or the related area of spelling that is unexpected for the student's age/grade, and;
- Characteristics of dyslexia.

Primary Reading/Spelling Characteristics of Dyslexia:

- Difficulty reading real words in isolation
- Difficulty accurately decoding nonsense words
- Slow, inaccurate, or labored oral reading (lack of reading fluency)
- Difficulty with learning to spell

The reading/spelling characteristics are the result of difficulty with the following:

- The development of phonological awareness, including segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words
- Learning the names of letters and their associated sounds
- Phonological memory (holding information about sounds and words in memory)
- Rapid naming of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet

Secondary consequences of dyslexia may include the following:

- Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written composition
- A limited amount of time spent in reading activities

The Student Assistance Team will evaluate the collected data and make a recommendation for further assessment when these criteria are met.

IV. Assessment of Dyslexia (Handbook Pg. 6)

Students enrolling in Montgomery ISD shall be assessed for dyslexia and **related disorders at appropriate times** (TEC §38.003(a)). The appropriate time depends upon multiple factors including the student's reading performance, reading difficulties, poor response to supplemental, scientifically based reading instruction, teachers' input, and parents' or guardians' input. Additionally, the appropriate time for assessing is early in a student's school career (19 TAC §74.28), **the earlier the better**. While earlier is better, students will be recommended for assessment for dyslexia even if the reading difficulties appear later in a student's school career.

The procedures followed for assessment include:

1. Notify parents or guardians of proposal to assess student for dyslexia
2. Inform parents or guardians of their rights under §504
3. Obtain parent or guardian permission to assess the student for dyslexia
4. Assess student, being sure that individuals/professionals who administer assessments have training in the evaluation of students for dyslexia and related disorders (19 TAC §74.28).

Tests, assessments, and other evaluation materials will (§504):

- Be validated for the specific purpose for which they are used
- Include material tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely materials that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient
- Be selected and administered so as to ensure that, when a test is given to a student with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level, or whatever other factor the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills
- Include multiple measures of a student's reading abilities such as informal assessment information (e.g., anecdotal records, lists of books the student has read, audio recordings of the student's oral reading)
- Be administered by trained personnel and in conformance with the instructions provided by the producer of the evaluation materials

Assessment of Special Education Students (Handbook Pg. 43 – Q #38)

If a student is already in special education, but exhibits the characteristics of dyslexia or related disorders and is referred for assessment, assessment procedures for students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA 2004) will be followed. Assessment data from prior special education assessments may be utilized, and/or additional assessment may be conducted by personnel trained in assessment to evaluate students for dyslexia and related disorders. In this case, the ARD committee will serve as the committee of knowledgeable persons.

Assessment of Students Identified Outside the District

Students identified as having dyslexia or related disorders from an outside source will be evaluated for eligibility in the district's program. Montgomery ISD may choose to accept the outside

assessment, or may re-assess the student. In either situation, the committee of knowledgeable persons will determine the identification status of a student enrolled in Montgomery ISD, and the placement of the student in the dyslexia program(s).

Domains to Assess (Handbook Pg. 7)

Montgomery ISD administers measures that are related to the student's educational needs. Depending upon the student's age and stage of reading development, the following are the areas related to reading that should be assessed:

- Reading real and nonsense words in isolation (decoding)
- Phonological awareness
- Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)
- Rapid naming
- Reading fluency (rate and accuracy)
- Reading comprehension
- Written spelling

Based on the student's academic difficulties and characteristics, additional areas that can be assessed include vocabulary, written expression, handwriting, and mathematics.

V. English Language Learners (Handbook Pg. 7 & 8) (This refers to students served in Bilingual and ESL programs as well as students designated Limited English Proficient (LEP) whose parents have denied services.)

Much diversity exists among English Language Learners (ELLs). The identification and service delivery process for dyslexia must be in step with the student's linguistic environment and educational background. In Montgomery ISD, the LPAC (Language Proficiency Assessment Committee) will be involved in the decision making process.

Additional data to be gathered when assessing English Language Learners:

- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) documentation which includes the following:
 - Home language survey
 - Assessment related to identification for limited English proficiency (oral language proficiency tests and norm-referenced tests)
 - TAKS documentation when available
 - Texas English Language Proficiency system (TELPAS) information (Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE) and Texas Observation Protocol (TOP)).
 - Type of language programming provided and language of instruction
 - Linguistic environment and second-language acquisition development
 - Previous schooling in and outside of the United States.

Additional assessment when assessing English Language Learners:

- Comprehensive oral language proficiency testing should be completed in English and the student's native language whenever possible

- If the student has received academic instruction in his/her native language, as well as English, then the “Domains to Assess” need to be completed in both languages to the appropriate extent.

Interpretation:

Test results of English Language Learners will be interpreted in light of the student’s: language development (in both English and the student’s native language), educational history, linguistic background, socioeconomic issues, and any other pertinent factors that affect learning.

VI. Committee of Knowledgeable Persons (Handbook Pg. 8 & 9)

A team or committee of knowledgeable persons determines whether the student has dyslexia. The team must be knowledgeable about:

- The student being assessed
- The reading process
- Dyslexia and related disorders
- Dyslexia instruction
- District or charter school, state, and federal guidelines for assessment
- The assessments used
- The meaning of the collected data

This committee determines the identification of dyslexia after reviewing all accumulated data including the following areas:

- The observations of the teacher, district or charter school staff, and/or parent/guardian
- Data gathered from the classroom (including student work and the results of classroom measures) and information found in the student’s cumulative folder (including the developmental and academic history of the student)
- Data-based documentation of student progress during instruction/intervention
- Language Assessment Proficiency Committee (LPAC) documentation, when applicable
- The results of administered assessments
- All other accumulated data regarding the development of the student’s learning and his/her educational needs

The student’s difficulties in the area of reading will reflect one or more of the primary characteristics of dyslexia with unexpectedly low performance for the student’s age and educational level in the following areas:

- Reading real words in isolation
- Decoding nonsense words
- Reading fluency (both rate and accuracy)
- Written spelling (an isolated difficulty in spelling would not be sufficient to identify dyslexia)

This unexpectedly low reading performance will be the result of a deficit in phonological processing, including the following:

- Phonological awareness

- Rapid naming
- Phonological memory

Many students with dyslexia will have difficulty with the secondary characteristics of dyslexia, including reading comprehension and written composition.

The committee of knowledgeable persons will also incorporate the following guidelines from TEC §38.003 and 19 TAC §74.28:

- The student has received conventional (appropriate) instruction
- The student has an unexpected lack of appropriate academic progress (in the areas of reading and spelling)
- The student has adequate intelligence (an average ability to learn in the absence of print or in other academic areas)
- The student exhibits characteristics associated with dyslexia
- The student's lack of progress is not due to sociocultural factors such as language differences, irregular attendance, or lack of experiential background.

If the committee determines that the student has dyslexia, the committee of knowledgeable persons also determines whether the student has a disability under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, §504. Not all students with dyslexia are automatically eligible for §504. A student is considered to have a disability under §504 if the condition substantially limits the student's learning. Students with additional factors that complicate their dyslexia may require additional support or referral to special education. (See Flow Chart)

At any time during the assessment for dyslexia, identification process, or instruction related to dyslexia, students may be referred for evaluation for special education. At times, students will display additional factors/areas complicating their dyslexia and requiring more support than what is available through dyslexia instruction. At other times, students with severe dyslexia or related disorders will be unable to make adequate academic progress within any of the programs for dyslexia or related disorders. In such cases, a referral to special education for evaluation and possible identification as a child with a disability within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) will be made as needed.

VII. Program Entrance Criteria

1. Primary Difficulties: *Below average in one or more of the following areas.*

Difficulty

- ❖ Reading Real Words in Isolation
- ❖ Decoding Nonsense Words
- ❖ Fluency (rate & accuracy)
- ❖ Written Spelling (not sufficient by itself to identify dyslexia)

2. Phonological Processing Difficulties: *Below level in one or more of the following areas.*

Difficulty

- ❖ Phonological Awareness
- ❖ Rapid Naming
- ❖ Phonological Memory

3. Unexpected: Unexpectedness is considered in relation to the student’s other cognitive abilities, age, or educational level. This may include an average ability to learn in the absence of print or in other academic areas.

Other Data Considered:

- _____ Received conventional (appropriate) instruction
- _____ Sociocultural factors: language, attendance, experiential background
- _____ Secondary characteristics: difficulty with reading comprehension and written composition
- _____ Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)

Additional Considerations:

- _____ Vision screening
- _____ Hearing screening
- _____ Teacher reports of classroom concerns
- _____ Basal reading series assessment
- _____ Accommodations provided by classroom teachers
- _____ Academic progress reports and/or report cards
- _____ Samples of school work
- _____ Parent conferences
- _____ Testing for limited English proficiency
- _____ Speech and language screening through a referral process
- _____ The K-2 reading instrument
- _____ State student assessment

VIII. Instruction for Students with Dyslexia (Handbook Pg. 11)

Once it has been determined that a student has dyslexia, Montgomery ISD shall provide an appropriate instructional program for the student (TEC §38.003). The following procedures will be followed:

- Instructional decisions for a student with dyslexia are made by a team that is knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation information, and instructional components and approaches for students with dyslexia.
- Montgomery ISD shall purchase a reading program or develop their own reading program for students with dyslexia and related disorders as long as the program is characterized by the descriptors found in the state dyslexia handbook 2007 (see Components of Instruction).
- Montgomery ISD will provide each identified student access at his/her campus to the services of a teacher trained in dyslexia and related disorders. The district may, with the

approval of each student's parents or guardians, offer additional services at a centralized location. Such centralized services shall not preclude each student from receiving services at his or her campus (19 TAC§ 74.28).

- Parents/guardians of students eligible under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, §504, will be informed of all services and options available to the student under that federal statute.
- Teachers who provide the appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia will be trained in the professional development activities specified by the district and/or campus decision making committee. As stated in 19 TAC, §74.28, the teachers who provide appropriate instruction for students with dyslexia must be trained and be prepared to implement instructional strategies that utilize individualized, intensive, multisensory, phonetic methods and a variety of writing and spelling components. They may serve as trainers and consultants in the area of dyslexia and related disorders to regular, remedial, and special education teachers.

(Handbook Pg. 12) Montgomery ISD will provide a parent education program for the parents/guardians of students with dyslexia and related disorders. The program information will be included in a handbook and/or presentations which include:

- Characteristics of dyslexia and related disorders
- Information on assessment and diagnosis of dyslexia
- Information on effective strategies for teaching students with dyslexia
- Awareness of information on classroom modifications and especially of modifications allowed on standardized testing (19 TAC §74.28)

Components of Instruction (Handbook Pg. 12)

The instructional program will be offered in a small class setting and include reading, writing, and spelling as appropriate. The major instructional strategies will utilize individualized, intensive, and multisensory methods as appropriate. Components of instruction, as appropriate for the reading needs of the student, include:

- Phonemic awareness instruction that enables students to detect, segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken language
- Graphophonemic knowledge (phonics) instruction that takes advantage of the letter-sound plan in which words that carry meaning are made of sounds and sounds are written with letters in the right order. Students with this understanding can blend sounds associated with letters into words and can separate words into component sounds for spelling and writing
- Language structure instruction that encompasses morphology (the study of meaningful units of language such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots), semantics (ways that language conveys meaning), syntax (sentence structure), and pragmatics (how to use language in a particular context)
- Linguistic instruction directed toward proficiency and fluency with patterns of language so that words and sentences are carriers of meaning
- Strategy-oriented instruction in the strategies students use for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension that students need to become independent readers

Instructional approaches, as appropriate to meet the instructional needs of the student, include:

- Explicit, direct instruction that is systematic (structured), sequential, and cumulative. Instruction is organized and presented in a way that follows a logical sequential plan, fits the nature of language (alphabetic principle) with no assumption of prior skills or language knowledge, and maximizes student engagement. This instruction proceeds at a rate commensurate with students’ needs, ability levels, and demonstration of progress
- Individualized instruction that meets the specific learning needs of each individual student in a small group setting; a reading curriculum that matches each student’s individual ability level and contains all of the *Components of Instruction* mandated in 19 TAC §74.28
- Intensive, highly concentrated instruction that maximizes student engagement, uses specialized methods and materials, produces results, and contains all the components of instruction mandated in 19 TAC §74.28
- Meaning-based instruction that is directed toward purposeful reading and writing, with an emphasis on comprehension and composition
- Multisensory instruction that incorporates the simultaneous use of two or more sensory pathways (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile) during teacher presentations and student practice

Montgomery ISD utilizes the following programs:

Campus Name	Program(s)
Montgomery Elementary	Dyslexia Intervention Program (DIP), Read Well, Read Naturally
Stewart Creek Elementary	Dyslexia Intervention Program (DIP), Read Well, Read Naturally
Lone Star Elementary	Dyslexia Intervention Program (DIP), Read Well, Read Naturally
Montgomery Intermediate	Dyslexia Intervention Program (DIP), Read Naturally
Montgomery Middle	Dyslexia Intervention Program (DIP), Read Naturally
Montgomery Junior High	Dyslexia Intervention Program (DIP), Read Naturally
Montgomery High School	Read Naturally, Practical Writing

IX. Timeline

The following timeline applies to students in regular education programs, or who may qualify as §504:

- Upon receipt of parent permission to assess until assessment is completed shall be 30 school days or less.
- From the completion of the assessment to the committee of knowledgeable persons meeting for determination of dyslexia and program placement shall be 30 school days or less.
- Following the committee of knowledgeable persons meeting until program begins (if it is determined the student is eligible for the dyslexia program) shall be 30 school days or less.

Special education students shall follow the timelines required by federal law, under IDEIA 2004.

X. Annual Meeting

A Dyslexia Committee meeting should be held at least once during the academic school year.

XI. Program Exit Criteria

Upon successful completion of the district dyslexia program(s), as measured by program mastery checks (assessments) completed at regular intervals, students will be exited from the district dyslexia program(s). Additional criteria for exit may include but is not limited to: grades from progress reports or report cards, state assessment data, benchmarks, teacher and/or parent observations/checklists, and individual dyslexia program requirements.

XII. Monitoring of Students

Students that have been dismissed (exited) from the Montgomery ISD dyslexia program will receive regular monitoring. These checks will occur each six weeks.

Monitoring may include, but is not limited to the collection/evaluation of:

- progress reports
- report cards
- state assessment data
- teacher reports/checklists
- parent reports/checklists
- counselor reports
- other program reports
- additional assessment data

Students qualifying for dyslexia services that are identified as §504 or Special Education will follow monitoring/re-evaluation requirements outlined in federal law.

XIII. District Contacts for Dyslexia

Location	Name	Phone Number
Montgomery ISD District Office	Sarah Hilburn <i>Director of Curriculum & Instruction</i>	936-582-1333
Dyslexia Specialists		
Montgomery Elementary	Lori Byrnes	936-597-6333
Stewart Creek Elementary	Debbie Bean, Billie Jo King	936-582-5355
Lone Star Elementary	Karen Bravenec	936-588-6100
Montgomery Intermediate	Karen Howard-Clark	936-597-6494
Montgomery Middle	Teresa Phillips	936-597-7070
Montgomery Junior High	Beverly Smythia	936-582-6400
Montgomery High School	Deborah Moore	936-597-6401

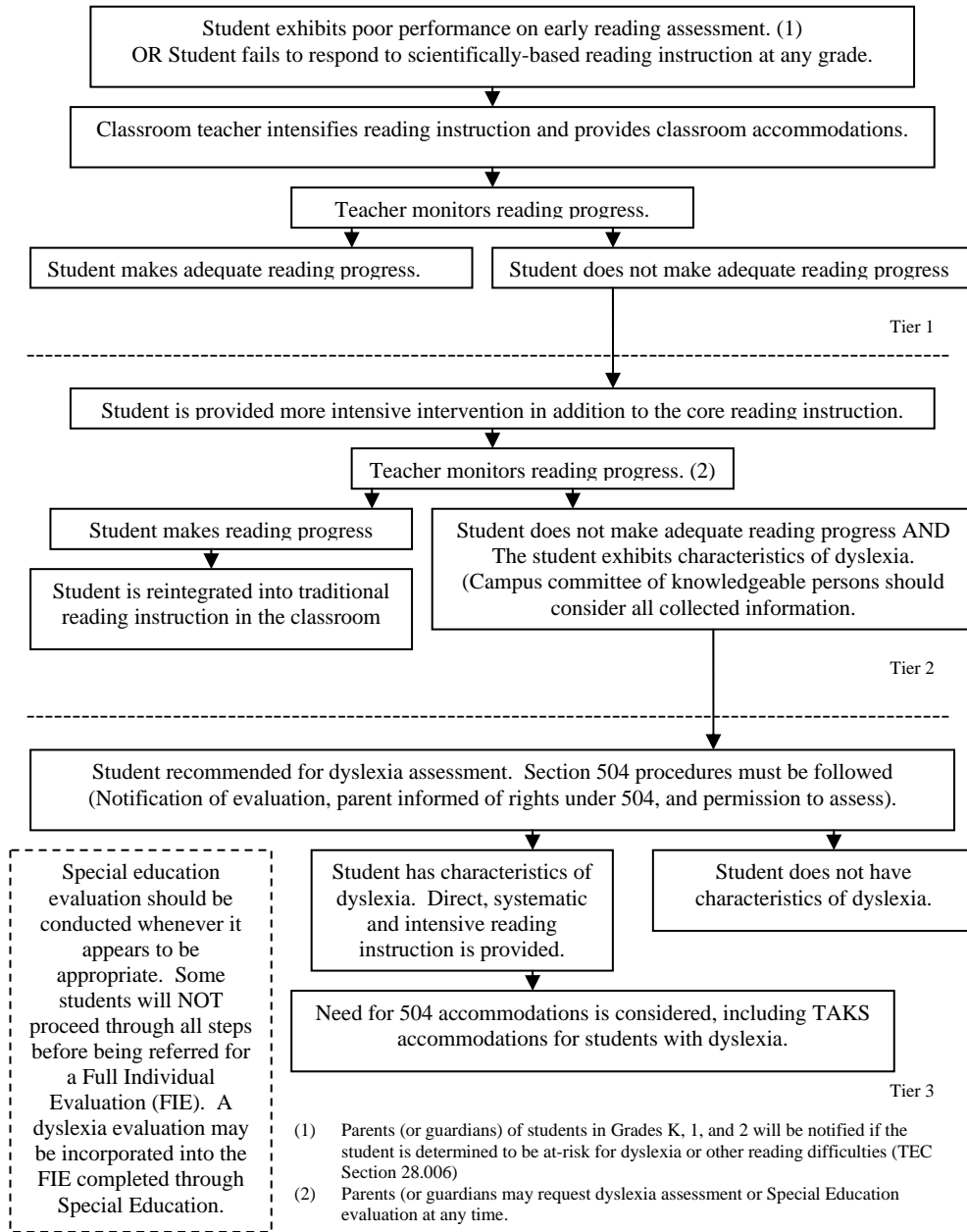
XIV. Flow Chart

The process for assessment, identification, and instruction for students with dyslexia is represented

in the following visual for ease of use. It is not meant to represent every aspect of the Montgomery ISD dyslexia process, but should give a general overview of the district procedures.

Flow Chart for Dyslexia

2007 Handbook



It is the policy of Montgomery ISD to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability in providing educational services, activities and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended/ Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended/ the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended/ and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Montgomery ISD will take steps to ensure that the lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs. For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX Coordinator, Babette Eikenberg, Ed.D., at 13159 Walden Rd. Montgomery, TX 77356, 936-582-1333, and/or the Section 504 Coordinator, Dawne McDougall, at 700 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Montgomery, TX 77356, 936-597-6407.